

Citation:

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Abstract:

This current study assessed whether heterosexual dating partners are similar in their values about communication and how well such similarities predict partners' attraction to one another and satisfaction with their relationship. Participants were 135 couples who described themselves as "seriously involved"; and had been dating for an average of 15 months. They completed a version of Burleson and Samter's (1990) Communication Functions Questionnaire, which assesses the value placed on several distinct communication skills and activities, and multiple measures of interpersonal attraction and relationship satisfaction. Correlational analyses indicated that partners' evaluations of communication skills and activities were not significantly related. However, degree of similarity in couples' communication values was moderately related to the assessments of attraction and satisfaction, demonstrating that partners with similar communication values were more attracted to one another and more satisfied with their relationship. In particular, similarities in the value placed on affectively oriented forms of communication such as ego support, comforting, and conflict management were significantly associated with indices of partner attraction and relationship satisfaction. Subsidiary analyses indicated that the similarities in couples' communication values were not due to convergence (the tendency to become more similar over time). The results are discussed in terms of how cognitive similarities, especially those directly implicated in the conduct of a relationship, may contribute to the health and well being of that relationship.